ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A satellite communications system uses multiple ground stations and one or more satellites for communicating between mobile subscribers and a land-based communications network, such as the PSTN or the Internet. Multiple ground stations geographically dispersed minimize toll charges incurred routing calls from a mobile subscriber through the land network by reducing the need for long-distance calling. Further, because each ground station communicates with a given satellite using the same frequency spectrum, the subscriber capacity of the system increases and/or bandwidth requirements for the communications link between ground stations and satellites may be reduced. The present system uses ground-based beamforming techniques enabling each satellite to transmit signals in multiple transmission beams, each beam supporting one or more mobile subscribers. Each beam may reuse the same frequency spectrum, thereby increasing the number of subscribers supported by each satellite. Multiple ground stations cooperatively relay signals through a given satellite in a manner complementary with ground-based beamforming.